



The Facts on International Gender-based Violence

Violence against women and girls and men and boys is a global epidemic. One in three women worldwide will experience gender-based violence (GBV) as will one in five men.¹ GBV is often used as a tactic to dominate, humiliate, terrorize, and displace communities. This type of violence includes child marriage, “honor killing,” rape, trafficking, and domestic violence. It has devastating consequences for individuals, families, and for society as a whole. GBV undermines economic development, obstructs legal and judicial systems, cripples the growth of healthy social norms, and denies women and girls their basic human rights.

- Globally, as much as 35 percent of women have experienced intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.²
- At least one in three women globally will be beaten, raped, or otherwise abused during her lifetime. In most cases, the abuser is a member of the woman’s family.³
- Approximately one in four women and girls over age 15 may experience sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives, and rates of sexual abuse by non-partners range from one to 12 percent over the course of a woman’s lifetime.⁴
- 12.3 million adults and children are trafficked each year into forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world; 56 percent of these victims are women and girls.⁵

Gender-based Violence in Conflict, Post-conflict, and Humanitarian Settings

- Sexual and gender-based violence is especially pervasive in conflict, post-conflict and humanitarian settings where women and girls and men and boys are targeted for abuse.

¹ Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise, *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists* (Washington D.C.: The World Health Organization, PATH, 2005).

² “Violence Against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women, Fact Sheet No. 239,” last modified October 2013, World Health Organization, accessed August 11, 2014, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>.

³ Claudia Garcia-Moreno et al., *WHO Multi-Country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women’s Responses* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2005).

⁴ García-Moreno et al., *WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

⁵ “Trafficking in Persons: Ten Years of Partnering to Combat Modern Slavery,” U.S. Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, last modified June 14, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/143327.pdf>.

Women and girls often comprise the largest number of people targeted and are the most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because of their age, gender, and social status.^{6 7}

- In conflict settings, rates of intimate partner violence are often higher than sexual violence rates perpetrated by individuals outside of the home.⁸
- Statistics on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) demonstrate how sexual violence in conflict also affects men. In the DRC, 23.6 percent of 405 surveyed men experienced sexual violence during their lives, 64.5 percent of these men experienced it in the context of the country's civil wars. Of these cases, 92.5 percent of the perpetrators were men and 11.1 percent were women (mostly women combatants). Of the survivors, 56 percent reported current symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and 47.5 percent of major depression and 22.8 percent had attempted suicide.⁹
- In detention settings and repressive states, men and boys experience higher levels of GBV. For example during the Bosnian War, it is reported that 80 percent of the 5,000 male concentration camp victims in Sarajevo were raped in detention.¹⁰

Health and Social Consequences of Gender-based Violence

- Women whose partners have physically or sexually abused them are 16 percent more likely to give birth to a low birthweight baby, almost twice as likely to experience depression and 1.5 times more likely to contract HIV and AIDs as compared to women who never experienced physical or sexual abuse.¹¹
- Women who reported physical or sexual violence by a partner, in a 2005 World Health Organization study, were also more likely to report having had at least one induced abortion or miscarriage than women who did not report abuse.¹²
- Sexual violence dramatically increases women and girls' vulnerability to HIV and AIDS by making it difficult or impossible for them to abstain from sex and have their partners be faithful, or use a condom.¹³

⁶ U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict: Basic Standards of Best Practice on the Documentation of Sexual Violence as a Crime under International Law* (United Kingdom: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2014), 15).

⁷ Marie Vlachová and Lea Bion, ed., "Executive Summary," in *Women in an Insecure World: Violence Against Women Facts, Figures and Analysis* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2005), 14-17.

⁸ Lindsay Stark and Alastair Ager, "A systematic review of prevalence studies of gender-based violence in complex emergencies," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 12(3) (2011): 127-134.

⁹ Kirsten Johnson et al., "Association of sexual violence and human rights violations with physical and mental health in territories of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 304(5) (2010): 555-562.

¹⁰ Sandesh Sivakumaran, "Sexual violence against men in armed conflict," *European Journal of International Law* 18(2) (2011): 253-276.

¹¹ Charlotte Watts, "Preventing HIV by preventing violence: global prevalence of intimate partner violence and childhood sexual abuse" (paper presented at the XVIII International AIDS Conference, Vienna, Austria, July 18-23, 2014).

¹² Watts, "Preventing HIV by preventing violence."

¹³ American Foundation for AIDS Research, "Women, Sexual Violence and HIV" (paper presented at An amfAR Symposium, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 25, 2005), 4-5.

- Children who are sexually abused are more likely to engage in behaviors known to be risky for HIV as adults. They are also more likely to experience sexual or domestic violence as adults.¹⁴
- Men who are violent toward their intimate partners are more likely to have multiple sexual partners than men who are not violent toward their partners.¹⁵
- Boys who witness or experience family violence are more likely to commit rape.¹⁶

Social and Economic Costs of Gender-based Violence

- In the United States, the health care cost of intimate partner rape, physical assault and stalking totals \$5.8 billion each year, nearly \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services. Lost productivity from paid work, household chores and the lifetime earnings homicide victims lose total nearly \$1.8 billion.¹⁷
- Conservative estimates of lost productivity from domestic violence range from 1.2 percent of Brazil and Tanzania's GDP to two percent of Chile's GDP. These figures do not include costs associated with long-term effects, including consequences for subsequent generations.¹⁸
- In Vietnam, household out of pocket costs for accessing survivor services equated to 21 percent of women's average monthly income, and foregone earnings due to missed work equated to 13.4 percent of the average monthly household income.¹⁹

The Value of Educating Women and Girls and Preventing Gender-based Violence

- Each additional year of education that citizens of a state receive, reduces the chances of that state falling into civil war.²⁰
- Voters who have at least primary school education are 1.5 times more likely to support democracies than voters with no education.²¹
- Increased education for women has led to a 50 percent reduction in child mortality rates over the last 40 years.²²

¹⁴ Etienne G. Krug et al., ed., *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002), 164.

¹⁵ Krug, *World Report*, 164.

¹⁶ Krug, *World Report*, 164.

¹⁷ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States* (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003).

¹⁸ Seema Vyas, *Estimating the Association Between Women's Earnings and Partner Violence: Evidence from the 2008-2009 Tanzania National Panel Survey* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2013).

¹⁹ Nata Duvury, Caren Grown, and Jenifer Redner, *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence at the Household and Community Levels: An Operational Framework for Developing Countries* (Washington, D.C.: ICRW International Center for Research On Women, 2004), 1-42.

²⁰ Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler, "Aid, Policy and Growth in Post-Conflict Societies," *European Economic Review*. 48 (2004): 1125-45.

²¹ Paul, "Aid Policy."

- In sub-Saharan Africa, investing in girls' education has the potential to increase agricultural production by 25 percent.²³
- If all women in sub-Saharan Africa received a primary education, 1.8 million lives could be saved each year.²⁴
- There would be a 14 percent decrease in child marriages if all girls received primary education and 64 percent fewer marriages if all girls completed secondary school.²⁵

²² Mercy Tembon and Lucia Fort, ed., *Girls' Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment, and Economic Growth* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2008).

²³ Tembon, *Girls' Education in the 21st Century*.

²⁴ Tembon, *Girls' Education in the 21st Century*.

²⁵ Tembon, *Girls' Education in the 21st Century*.